

History of Valley Stream

Presented by Miss Genevieve Elderkin
at the Nassau County Tercentenary
Pageant at Valley Stream, New York

Compared with Hempstead and Oyster Bay, Valley Stream is new. Most of the material for this topic comes from a special address given by Robert Dibble in 1928. It was about 1837 Robert Pagan moved to Valley Stream. At that time the Village was scattered and sparsely settled; it was all farmland and woodland.

Near Elmont was Foster's meadow; southwest section, a squatter settlement was known as Hungry Harbor; northeast section, as Tigertown and the business section along Rockaway Ave. with five hotels and four residents; later Rum Junction, another section, Cookie Hill.

Six years after he came to this village Robert Pagan gave the name Valley Stream to the section because of the many hills to the North and a number of small streams in the nearby meadows. Between two of these north of Hendrickson avenue, Mr. Pagan built a tiny one story house and opened the first general store in the village.

Besides farming there were two other industries; a saw mill and two grist mills. The saw mill was owned by the Wright family, and was situated in the Northeast section of the town. One of the grist mills was owned by John and Matthew Cornell. The first tavern in the town was owned by Smith Combes whose son Treadwell is here tonight. Treadwell is a carpenter.

In her home north of Hendrickson Avenue, Helen Pagan started the first church services held by a circuit minister. Because

Pagan sounded heathenish, Robert Pagan changed the "g" to "y" and called it Payan as it is known today. Mr. Payan died a short time ago in his home on the corner of Merrick Road and Payan Avenue and Mrs. Payan moved to East Rockaway.

Merrick Road was not yet constructed but Corona Avenue, Dutch Broadway, and Central Avenue gave access to Hempstead Turnpike which was the main road east at that time. It was about 1853 that the plan road used by the people journeying to Camp meetings at Merrick became Merrick Road.

The stage coach from Babylon ran over this road every other day. A toll at the rate of one cent a mile was paid at three toll gates along the road. The coach used to go thru Pearsalls Corners, now Lynbrook, at eight o'clock in the morning and get to New York about three o'clock in the afternoon; and if they planned to do any shopping they had to stay overnight and come back the next day.

The first school was built near District #13 and Marshall Dible was the school teacher. Hattie Miller remembers raising the money for the first school flag in Valley Stream, and if they raised the money they had to ride into Brooklyn in an old farm wagon to buy the staff.

The second school organized and there was a school parade at Rockaway and the first school was invited. A banner was painted by one of the residents here on an old sheet. It was in blue and gold; a picture of an eagle with spread wings and there were streamers from his mouth with the words "Knowledge is Power" in gold. Valley Stream took first prize for their banner and also for the best appearance in

the parade. The students had been coached for a week ahead by an old Civil War veteran, Mr. Hall.

The coming of the Merrick Road split up the farms and shifted settlement to the south. Another store was opened at Central Avenue and Merrick Road. Then a blacksmith shop was opened by Mrs. Newblock father; it was the first one this side of Jamaica, and if there were any troubles with the horses on the way out the people either had to back to Jamaica or come out to Valley Stream. Mrs. Newblock is seven four years old and lives at Merrick Road and Ballard Avenue.

Mrs. Abrams who lived on Catherine Street and Rockaway Avenue was the oldest resident of Valley Stream and remembers taking a free ride on the first train that was run along the road. One of the first trains to go through here had an accident at the Merrick road. It hit a tallyho and killed 5 people. With the opening of the railroad in 1864 another means of travel became available.

Anton ^{An}Bruns built the hotel at the East corner of the Sunrise Highway and Rockaway Avenue; and business being good, a rival hotel, now the Pitney, was started by Schreiber. The hotel was taken over later by Jack Bunny. Soon there were three hotels in the section.

Tom West used to have a hotel where Paul's is now and there used to be a public wash stand outside that was used by the people riding out on the Merrick Road on bicycles. The first grocery store

in the village was owned by the Golder family and stood where Moore's battery is now. The present development began about 1924.

This information was gathered from some of the following residents who also attended the pageant.

Mrs. Henry Combes		
Miss Hattie Miller	Merrick Road	
Miss Anna Miller	Merrick Road	
Miss Fannie Edwards		74
Mrs. Newblock	Merrick Road	75
Mr. Treadwell Combes		76
Mr. Henry Keller		76
Dr. & Mrs. Foster		
Mrs. Elliot		
Mr. & Mrs. Pflugge		
Mr. Crowell		
Dr. Elderd		
Mr. Ebenezer M. Hall		
Mr. William Lindner		
Mr. William Langdon		72
Mr. Albert Reising		80
Mr. West		